

# **Astrobiology in the Classroom: The Scientist-Teacher Partnerships of Project AstroBio**

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Project AstroBio, a NAI-supported program that matches scientists and grades 3-12 teachers for year-long partnerships in the classroom, allows volunteer scientists (student, professional, and skilled amateur) to share their excitement of discovery and provide models for what science is and is not. We now support 45 partnerships in the Puget Sound region. Following a two-day summer training workshop for both partners, each scientist visits his or her classroom at least five times in the school year, though many do more. We do not impose a curriculum except that it should broadly bear on some aspect of astrobiology – thus each teacher/scientist team chooses their topics and what they want to do and when and how. We strongly encourage the use of inquiry-based, hands-on activities to optimize student learning, and to that end, create our own activities and search for more among our NAI colleagues. During the year we provide further support through activities such as stargazing parties, planetarium shows, half-day workshops, and visits to the Pacific Science Center and other members of our supporting Consortium.

Project AstroBio began in 1997 as Project ASTRO/Seattle, but since 2002 we have introduced more biology content, especially as it relates to life in the universe. Thus our scientist partners are no longer confined to astronomers and other physical scientists, but include biologists of all types; for example, our UW Astrobiology Program has become a major source of new scientist partners. More information: <http://www.astro.washington.edu/projastrobio>